

## On Pedagogy

The revelations of Almighty God as revealed to us by the Catholic Church frequently involve the number three: the Blessed Trinity--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Holy Family--Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; and the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love, for example. The Church herself describes the sources of Sacred Revelation as being like three legs of a stool: Holy Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterial teachings of the Church. I like to borrow this analogy from the Church when I describe the core values of The Montfort Academy as the three legs of a solid stool, the absence of any one which would render it weak and unstable.

At The Montfort Academy, those three legs are classical education, Catholic faith, and academic excellence, the last one proceeding inevitably from the first two. These three elements of our educational approach provide a whole stronger and more robust than the sum of its parts.

*The past is prologue* says Shakespeare, and as such, it informs our understanding of the present and directs our formation of the future. Classical education is the study of Man, and "all the forces and ideas that have governed [him], personal, religious, or political." Through the study of history, literature, and philosophy, the student encounters the great ideas, events, and personalities from over 4000 years of human activity and joins in what Mortimer Adler called *The Great Conversation*. Through it, the student learns to understand the mind and soul of Man by venturing into an infinitely vast and varied assembly of characters and personalities; people he knows or will meet again in his family, church, community, and profession. To know Man, and oneself among them, is the indispensable element of education.

But to come to know God is first. It is here that our Catholic faith informs and guides us -- through prayer, the Sacraments, and again, through our studies. We come to know the Creator two ways; first supernaturally through our prayer and sacramental lives, and second naturally by coming to know His creation through education, Man being the apex of that creation. The Church provides the means for the first -- through her rich liturgies and devotions -- and the template for the second -- by giving us a time-tested academic model for a rich, well-organized, and deeply textured curriculum and pedagogy that teaches us a passion for truth and the tools to pursue and discover it.

From these first two ideals must proceed the third -- excellence. Excellence for the elevation of the soul in faith; excellence for the pursuit of good in joyful hope; and excellence for the betterment of neighbor in love. But also excellence to command the practical realities of college preparation, admission, and financial scholarship. The classical, Catholic education at The Montfort Academy must provide the student with the means to be admitted to any college or university he wishes to attend, to receive generous scholarships to be able to afford that institution, and the proper preparation to be successful there in whatever field of study he chooses. And so it does. It is not by accident that the Cardinal Newman Society has seven times named The Montfort Academy to its Honor Roll as one of the top 50 Catholic high schools in the country.

Why do we so vigilantly stand on this sturdy stool of three legs? Perhaps a verse of The Montfort Academy's *alma mater* suggests the answer:

*With Roman might and wisdom Greek,  
Through Our Lady's help virtue seek;  
and Christ the Lord - Source, Summit, Peak!  
For Glory of the Blue and Gold.*

It is my great privilege to serve the students and families of The Montfort Academy and one for which I am grateful every single day. Through Our Lady's intercessions, may I always endeavor to do so as a handmaid of the Lord, according to His word.

*Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

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